United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ International Tribunal consisting of one prosecutor and 11 judges set up by Security Council to hear charges of violations of international humanitarian law in former Yugoslavia.

+ "Measures" taken by Guatemalan President viewed by Secretary-General with concern; urges efforts to re-establish and strengthen democracy, as soon as possible.

+ Security Council extends mandate of United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for another six months until 30 November, 1993.

+ Special Representative hails ongoing Cambodian election as great success for United Nations; polling proceeds smoothly on fourth day as country remains quiet; UNTAC encouraged by "astonishing participation" after 85 per cent turnout.

+ Electoral component in United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador to verify elections next spring would cost some $7 million for 11-month period, according to Secretary-General's estimate.

+ Security Council recommends to General Assembly that it grant Eritrea and Monaco membership in United Nations.

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An International Tribunal consisting of one prosecutor, two trial chambers and an appeals chamber with a total of 11 judges, has been set up by the Security Council to prosecute persons responsible for war crimes in former Yugoslavia. The Council took that action last night by adopting unanimously resolution 827 (1993) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which concerns threats to international peace and security.

The Council decided that practical arrangements must be made urgently to set up the Tribunal, and that all States must cooperate fully with the Tribunal and take any measures necessary under their domestic law to implement its statute. The decision where to seat the International Tribunal would be

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made after consultations between the United Nations and the Netherlands. The Tribunal might sit elsewhere in order to for it to exercise its functions efficiently, the Council said.

The Tribunal is intended to prosecute human rights violations from 1 January 1991 and a date to be determined by the Council upon the restoration of peace. The Council has already created a five-member war crimes Commission to gather information on such violations in former Yugoslavia.

In a related development, Croatia has asked the United Nations to use its authority to "exert urgent political pressure" against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to exchange all captured persons and to set up a committee to resolve the problems of missing persons.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 20 May, Croatia also asked for the protection by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) of all mass grave sites discovered in the "occupied areas of Croatia". In spite of numerous contacts and efforts to resolve those problems, "the issue had remained at a standstill", the letter said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali views with concern the measures taken by the President of Guatemala, Jorge Serrano, on 24 May, and hopes that efforts will be made to re-establish and strengthen democracy, an essential companion to peace, as soon as possible, according to a statement issued today at Headquarters. The statement follows reports that President Serrrano had disolved the Congress and the Supreme Court and suspended constitutional rights.

The statement said the Secretary-General remained ready to recommend to the Security Council, in the spirit of the Esquipulas Agreements II of August 1987, that the United Nations should help implement the agreement. Negotiations are currently taking place between the Government and the Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to that end.

The Organization of American States (OAS) has sent a fact-finding mission led by its Secretary-General to Guatemala, and would consider the situation at a ministerial meeting in early June, the statement said.

The Secretary-General is mandated by the Security Council to follow closely developments in Central America in favour of peace and the promotion of democracy. In the case of Guatemala, he is represented by an Observer in the talks between the Government and URNG.

Under the Esquipulas Agreements, the five Presidents of Central America agreed, among other things, to promote democratization and national dialogue in their countries. At the Presidents' requests, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAS as well as the Foreign Ministers of the five countries, among others, were asked to establish an International Verification and Follow-up Commission (CIVS).

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The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for another six months until 30 November 1993. The Council took that action by adopting resolution 830 (1993) unanimously.

In a statement after the vote, Council President Yuliy Vorontsov (Russian Federation) said the statement contained in the Secretary-General's 21 May report reflected the Council's view.

The Secretary-General, in his report to the Council, had warned that the situation in the Middle East as a whole was likely to remain dangerous unless and until a comprehensive settlement could be reached. He expressed the hope that all concerned would make determined efforts to reach a just and durable peace agreement, as called for by Council resolution 338 of 1973.

In a separate development, the Council held consultations this afternoon on the work of the Council.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, has described the ongoing election there as a great success for the United Nations, and in particular for the staff of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). He urged all eligible Cambodians who had not yet voted to do so.

Approximately 85 per cent of the Cambodian electorate -- more than four million people -- had voted as of last night, and the turnout exceeded 90 per cent in some provinces, according to a United Nations spokesman. Polling continued smoothly today -- the fourth day of the election -- and the country remained very quiet. UNTAC was very encouraged by the "astonishing participation", but would remain vigilant and cautious until polling ended on Friday, he said.

A few violent incidents had been reported, but no casualties had been suffered, the spokesman noted. An Uruguayan UNTAC patrol and an Indonesian UNTAC convoy had been fired at by unidentified persons on separate occasions, and there had been some shelling around Siem Reap province.

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The expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to include an electoral component to observe and verify the general elections scheduled for March 1994, as proposed earlier by the Secretary-General, would cost an additional $7 million for the 11-month period from 1 June 1993 to 30 April 1994, according to an addendum to his report, dated 24 May.

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Such an added Electoral Division, which would operate in the framework of the existing regional offices, would require a total of 38 international personnel, including administrative support staff, and 7 local staff. During the polling itself, 900 electoral observers would be needed, most of them to be drawn from the existing personnel of ONUSAL, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations agency personnel and volunteers. The remaining 250 would be provided by the Secretariat and Member States.

The Secretary-General proposed that, should the Council decide to expand the mandate of ONUSAL, the additional cost be considered an expense to the Organization to be borne by Member States.
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The Security Council has recommended to the General Assembly that it grant Eritrea and Monaco membership in the United Nations. The Council took that action during two consecutive meetings today by adopting without a vote resolutions 828 and 829 (1993).

The General Assembly is expected to convene Friday morning to consider the Council's recommendation.

The admission of the two countries would bring to 183 the total of Member States of the United Nations.

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